

a self-evident truth admitted by all men; whereas a dogma is a doctrine promulgated by authority. Self-evident truths need no authority to promulgate them; and the objection to dogmatists is surely that it is neither good manners nor good sense to claim authority which is merely self-assumed, and certainty where certainty is not to be had. Professor Read, however, hardens his heart: 'I would even suggest that what is wrong with criticism today is not too much dogma but too little. Criticism is a tonic/ It would be interesting to know more exactly who are all these modern critics who deliver judgement with too blushing diffidence; certainly they blush unseen. And it would be interesting also to discover why an opinion should provide a more stimulating 'tonic' when asserted as a fact, which it is not, than expressed as what it is—an opinion. Certainly when Professor Read lays it down in his appropriately named *Sense of Glory*, for example, that national hatred is a consequence of 'humanism' (in the teeth of the tolerance of the eighteenth century); or that 'no mockery of the human spirit ever survives the hour of its birth' (as *if Candide* were dead); or that irony is 'the hall-mark of an insincere age' (as if Thomas Hardy had been insincere); or that Sterne is a classicist, because he is a humorist and 'all real humorists are classicists', though, on the other hand, 'we find no real humour among the ancients' (so

that nothing in
the Classics, apparently, is really 'classical');
or that Sterne
is 'the precursor of all psychological fiction'
(as if Madame
de la Fayette or Marivaux or Richardson
had never
existed); or that Rousseau (whose style is, on
the contrary,
singled out by Lanson as the first in the
French eighteenth
century to be 'oratoire, ample, resonnante')
broke down
'the dignity, the orotundity, and the
volubility of his
predecessors' (the pomp of Fontenelle, no
doubt, and the